

Road Podcast
“Ways to Improve English”
Listening Skills and
Understand Native
Speakers



Ways to Improve English Listening Skills and Understand Native Speakers

(whooshing) - Hey everyone. I'm Teela with Deep English. Thank you for joining me for today's lesson. I'll be giving you a few tips today on how to more easily understand a native English speaker. Not only that, but we'll also learn how to become a better listener in general. So this is a really cool lesson, because not only does it improve your English language skills, it also makes you a better listener in any language. And because we spend 60% of our communication time listening, it's really important that we know how to listen. And I don't think very many people are good listeners. And so I think it's really helpful to

take a bit of time to learn about how do we become better listeners? Because right now, you're probably retaining about 25% of what you hear when you hear someone speak in your native language. Imagine when you're hearing someone speak in English, that percentage is much lower. So it's worth it to take some time to learn how to understand more easily someone who is speaking in English, who is a native speaker. All right, so let's get started. I'll be giving you four different tips today. My first tip is to simply stay present. This is simple, but it's not necessarily easy. So there are three ways that I like to use to really stay present. So the first way is that when I'm listening to someone speak Spanish, because this is the other language that I speak, that's my

second language, when I'm listening to them speak Spanish, I make sure that I don't over-focus on every word they're saying. So I'm not trying to translate in my head what they're saying. Instead, I soften my focus, and I pay attention not only to the words, but also to the tone of their voice, to their facial expressions and their gestures, because when we tune in too closely to the words, we start to stress ourselves out. And we lose the big picture. And sometimes it's hard to follow what they're saying. So don't translate every word in your head. I know it's easier said than done. But try not to do it. So the second way to stay present is to not try to make your response to what they're saying while they're still speaking. So for example, when I was learning Spanish,

I would be listening to what the other person was saying, but I was also trying to create the perfect Spanish sentence in my head to say in response. And this was obviously a problem, because while I was creating this perfect response in my head, I was missing a lot of what they were saying. I was especially missing their tone and their gestures. So don't try to create a response while they are still talking. Instead, you have to learn to trust yourself. Trust that when they're done talking, that you'll come up with something. And you will, it will be easier the more that you relax into this. And so that brings us to the third way to stay present while you are listening to a native English speaker. And that is to remember that perfection is the enemy of fluency.

Becoming fluent in a language doesn't mean that you speak or understand the language perfectly, no. It means that you are able to communicate with fluidity in the language, and that's it. That you're able to flow when you speak and when you listen. So don't try to be perfect. Because the more perfect you try to be, the more stressed out you will be. And when you're stressed, there are places in your brain that actually shut down, and these parts of the brain are really helpful and necessary in communication. So we want to stay relaxed, we're not trying to be perfect. Instead, we're just kind of trying to flow with it. All right, so let's move on to my second tip to more easily understanding a native English speaker. And this one is to make learning English a necessity. So you

probably have noticed that when you are in an English-speaking country, you learn English more rapidly if you have ever been in one. Or you probably heard that you learn English more rapidly. And this is true, because when you are in a country that speaks the language that you are trying to learn, you learn it more quickly because you have to learn it. It's necessary for you to catch the bus, or for you to go grocery shopping. So you have to learn it. The good news is that we can make learning a necessity in our own lives, no matter where we live. So there are a few simple ways to do this. Number one, if you can make a friend who only speaks English. So maybe online, someone who only speaks English. So they don't even have an opportunity to

change into a language that is easier for you while you're speaking. So an English-speaking friend who doesn't speak any other language. That would be great. And that would be a really huge bonus in learning English more quickly and learning to listen. But even if you don't have a friend who only speaks English, there are other ways that you can make learning English a necessity. So for example, anytime that you are looking for a recipe of something to cook online, instead of Googling it, or instead of looking for something in your own native language, why not go on YouTube and look for the recipe on YouTube from an English speaker? And so this way, you have to listen to every detail that they say. And so you tune in more quickly, and you learn new

vocabulary more easily, because it's necessary for you to cook a meal. Okay? Let's see, what's another way, okay, another way. So whenever something breaks in my life, I usually Google it or go on YouTube, and I say how can I repair whatever. So for example, my boot broke the other day. The zipper of my boot broke. And so I went on YouTube, and I said how to fix a zipper. And I watched the video and I fixed it. So the next time that you're looking to repair something, instead of looking in your own language, why not go on YouTube and look in English, and so that you have to pay attention. If you want to wear those boots, you're going to have to learn to pay attention in English to the details. So making English a necessity. I think that one's

really important. Oh, and there was one other thing I wanted to say here. If you've ever been on the phone, and you've had the option to hear something in English or in your native language, it's really cool to choose the option in English, and that makes you tune in. So if you want to pay a bill, and you press okay, I'm going to hear it in English, you will have to tune in if you want to pay that bill. And so making a commitment to use English for some of the things that you have to do in your life will make English a necessity. All right, my third tip. This one is kind of obvious. Movies, TV shows, and Audible, or audio books. When I was learning Spanish, I loved to watch a movie in English and then to watch it again in Spanish without any subtitles. And so this

way is a really cool way to more easily tune into a native speaker. Because you already have the big idea of what's going on in the movie. So you already know what's happening. You know the characters in the plot. So you can tune into smaller details. And in this way, you will tune your ear. So that you can more easily understand new words. Another awesome thing that I loved to do while learning Spanish is listen to an audiobook of a book you've already read in your own language. So for example, I love Harry Potter books. I know, I'm a nerd. But Harry Potter is awesome. And so, because I already knew what happened in the Harry Potter books, it was easy for me to buy the Harry Potter book in an audiobook or on Audible, and then listen. And in this way, I

was more easily able to tune into the small details. And it made me a better listener in Spanish. You can also just go on YouTube and look for, there's often small segments of books on YouTube in audio form. Or TV shows, Netflix is a really great way to make yourself a better listener, really in any language, but especially in English. All right, let's move on to tip number four. Listen to many accents. So, when I was learning Spanish, I thought I was pretty good with my listening and understanding. I learned Spanish in Ecuador. Then one day, I was trying to speak Spanish with someone from Argentina. And I couldn't understand what they were saying. And I was so disappointed. I thought, what? I really thought that I understood Spanish pretty

well. Well, I understood Spanish well in one accent. But to really understand another language well, you have to listen to it in several other accents. And so for example, listening to English in an Australian accent, or a British accent, or even a Western accent from the Southern US can really help you to become a better listener in English. One cool tip I have for you here is to think about things that you have a lot of interest in. So maybe you're really interested in soccer. Go on social media or on YouTube, and find someone who talks about your favorite soccer team, but with an Australian accent. And then find like two more interests. Maybe you're also really interested in, in doing makeup. So find someone else with maybe a British accent

who does tutorials on how to do your makeup. And so in this way, you can listen to several different accents. And you'll become a really great listener in English. It'll be so much easier for you to understand a native English speaker if you've listened to several different accents. Okay, so those were my four tips for becoming a better listener and for more easily understanding a native English speaker. I hope this lesson not only helps your English language skills, but also helps you to become a better listener in your own language, so that you can show up as a really great friend or family member to the people in your life.

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